REMARKS

These remarks address the office communication mailed by the Examining Attorney, Debra S. Meislin, on September 3, 2003.

A. SPECIFICATION

Applicants filed a specification for this invention on December 26, 2001 ("original specification"). In response to the Examiner's rejection of the original specification in a July 15, 2002 office action, applicants filed a substitute specification in an amendment and response filed on October 11, 2002. In a December 23, 2002 office action, the Examiner informed that she did not enter the substitute specification into the case as it included new matter. Again, in applicants' March 24, 2003 response to the December 23rd office action, the applicants filed a substitute specification ("March substitute specification"). In an office action dated April 25, 2003, the Examiner informed that she did not enter the March substitute specification in this case, again, as it allegedly contained new matter. Yet again, in applicants July 25, 2003 response to the April 25th office action, the applicants filed a substitute specification ("July substitute specification").

In an office communication mailed on September 3, 2003, the Examining Attorney informed that the applicants' July 25th response to office action was a bona fide attempt to provide a complete reply to the April 25th office action. However, the Examiner noted that the applicants' July 25th response to office action was not considered fully responsive to the April 25th office action because "...the marked-up version of the specification and claims [were not] made with respect to the pending specification and claims."

In response to the September 3rd office communication from the Examining Attorney, the applicants herewith submit a substitute specification ("October substitute

specification"). The applicants respectfully submit that the October substitute specification is made with respect to the pending specification (which, since no substitute specification has been entered in this case, is the original specification). The applicants respectfully submit that the October substitute specification includes no new matter and discloses subject matter contained in the original specification.

Further, the October substitute specification is identical to the July substitute specification which was not entered by the Examiner. The applicants hereby respectfully request that the Examiner formally incorporate, into this response, those arguments, contained in the applicants July 25, 2003 response to office action, which relate to the acceptability of the substitute specification.

The applicants believe that the October substitute specification filed with this response is in compliance with 37 CFR 1.125. The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the substitute specification provided herein. If the Examiner has any objections to the October substitute specification, the applicants request that the Examiner contact the applicants' counsel.

B. CLAIMS

In the September 3rd communication, the Examiner stated that: "...the marked-up version of the specification and *claims* [were not] made with respect to the pending specification and *claims*" [emphasis added].

In the April 25th office action, the Examining Attorney informed that claims 1-13 and 16-35 were pending in the application. Thus, in the applicants July 25th response to office action, the applicants revised the claims (canceling claims 1-12 and 16-35, and adding new claim 36) The applicants believe that the amendments made in the applicants July 25th response to

office action are in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office regarding new amendment practice.

Regardless, the applicants have resubmitted the amendments to the claims. The amendments to the claims are identical to the amendments contained in the applicants July 25th response to office action.

The applicants would also like to restate that in the April 25th office action, the Examining Attorney stated that claim 13 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as set forth in the office action. The applicants have amended claim 13 to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection set forth by the Examining Attorney in the Office Action. The applicants have also added new claim 36 which incorporates subject matter from current claim 13. Applicants submit that current claims 13 and 36 are adequately supported by the specification and no new matter has been added through these amendments.

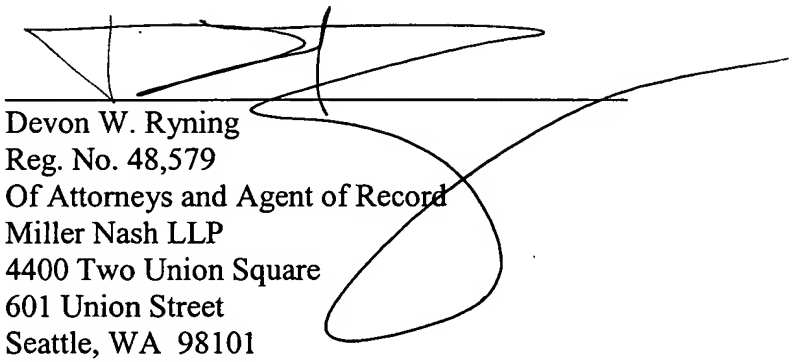
The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the amendments to the claims. If the Examiner has any continuing objections to the amendments to the claims, the applicants request that the Examiner contact the applicants counsel.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully request that the substitute specification be entered in this case. The applicants further request that the claim amendments be entered. Finally, the applicants earnestly solicit an early Notice of Allowance.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 13-3571 for any additional fees which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,



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[Amendments to the Specification:]

SCREW TIGHT TUBE VICE FRAME

{~~BACKGROUND~~}[FIELD] OF THE INVENTION

[0004] This invention {~~pertains~~}[relates generally] to the field of tattooing{~~,~~} and {~~is intended to improve~~}[tattoo machines. More particularly,] the {~~method~~}[invention] {~~used~~}[relates] to {~~secure~~}[an apparatus for securing] the tube grip{~~ to the tattoo machine frame. The tube grip~~}[, which] houses the needle bar {~~that holds the~~}[and] needle grouping, {~~which moves into and out~~}[to the frame] of {~~the skin in the act of tattooing~~}[a tattoo machine or intradermal injection device].

[BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION]

[[0005] Tattoo machines necessarily break the skin of the subject during the tattooing process, causing a risk of the spread of infectious diseases such as Hepatitis, HIV and AIDS. The standard in the industry therefore is to sterilize the tattoo machine before each use. In order to effectively and efficiently sterilize a tattoo machine, the components of the machine must be easy to remove, sterilize, and reassemble.]

[{~~0005] Because tattoos must be applied in a sterile manner, the~~ }[0005.1] Prior art tattoo machines typically have a needle or needle grouping which extends through the tattoo machine frame and is driven by a motor to reciprocate linearly. A hollow cylinder or]tube [is attached to the tattoo machine frame and the needle grouping passes through the tube. A portion of the tube, often having a larger external diameter than the rest of the tube, has a gnarled outer surface. This portion is called a tube]grip{~~ and needle groupings~~}[. The tube grip provides a gripable portion for the tattoo machine operator and also serves to guide the needle grouping and restrain lateral movement of the needle

grouping. The tube grip and needle grouping] must be removable to allow them to be cleaned and sterilized. On all modern tattoo machines, the tube grip is a removable part.

[**[0005.2]**]Existing {~~tube~~}[**tattoo**] {~~vice~~}[**machine**] technology {~~uses~~}[**employs**] several methods to secure the tube grip to the tattoo machine frame{~~, but many of these methods~~}[**which**] tend to bend or crimp the cylindrical tube grip. The {~~Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame (shown in FIG. 2) is designed~~}[**present apparatus available not only tend**] to {~~allow~~}[**damage**] the tube grip[**, but are slow**] to {~~be secured to the frame with a simple twist~~}[**remove**] and {~~released~~}[**reinstall, and apparatus**] with {~~a counter twist~~}[**multiple small screws are difficult to sterilize**].{~~ The Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame secures the tube grip in place just as securely as or more securely than existing technology, but will not bend or crimp the tube grip.~~}

[**[0005.3] A more recently developed method of attaching the tube to the frame is a split portion of the frame which partially encircles the tube and is tightened with a wing nut. Tattoo machines are covered with a light plastic bag during operation to avoid contamination or cross-contamination between the operator and subject. Not only are such bags often ripped by the protruding wing nut, but the tattoo machine is rendered less streamline by the frame extension, wing nut and bolt required. The wing nut type vice does not apply pressure evenly to the tube grip, and may result in bending or crimping of the tube grip.**]

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] {~~The~~}[**It is an**] object of the {~~Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame is~~ }[**present invention**]to[**provide a**] secure[**, easy to assemble and disassemble and streamlined apparatus for attaching**] the tube grip [**and the tube housing needles in a tattoo machine**]to the frame[**of the tattoo machine**] in a manner that improves on the methods currently {~~used~~}[**employed**] by tattoo machines{~~, while providing a housing for the tattoo machine components~~}. {~~The Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame consists of a tube~~}

[[0006.1] It is a further object of the invention to provide a screw tight tube] vice frame{, into which holes are drilled and tapped for attaching the}[comprising a] frame{ to other tattoo machine components}[, a compression nut], {and a tube vice mechanism for attaching the }[a compressible ferrule and a receiving piece and a]tube {grip to the frame. This tube vice mechanism allows}[adapted such that] the tube {grip to}[housing at least one needle may] be {secured to}[inserted in the receiving piece,] the {frame with a simple twist, and released with a counter twist}[ferrule slipped over the tube],[and the nut slipped over the tube and pushed up against the ferrule, then screwed onto the receiving piece such that the ferrule is compressed and grips and retains the tube] without bending or crimping it. {This is important because}

[[0006.2] It is yet a further object of the present invention to provide a tube vice frame that allows rapid and easy removal of] the tube grip{ with}[, tube and] needle groupings{ is removed often} to allow for cleaning and sterilization. [It is a further object of the present invention to provide a tattoo machine with a streamlined profile that is easily shrouded in plastic or other material without tearing the shroud.]

[[0006.3] Another object of the present invention is to provide an apparatus for securing a tube grip to be secured to or removed from a tattoo machine frame with a simple twist of a nut.]

[[0006.4] Another object of the present invention is to provide a method for manufacturing a screw tight tube vice frame that is efficient, inexpensive and creates a streamlined, easy to use vice frame on a tattoo machine which may be retrofitted to an existing tattoo machine.]

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE {SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING}[DRAWINGS]

[0007] FIG. 1 {shows the}[is a perspective view of a] tattoo machine with [a screw tight tube vice frame according to]the {Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame}[invention].

[0008] FIG. 2 {~~shows~~}[is an exploded perspective view of] the[key] components of the {~~Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame~~}[screw tight tube vice frame] in detail.

[[0008.1] FIG. 3 is a pre-assembly side detail view of a compression nut, ferrule and threaded rod according to the invention.]

[[0008.2] FIG. 4 is an assembled side detail view of a compression nut, ferrule and threaded rod according to the invention.

]

[DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0009] Figure 1 depicts the preferred embodiment of the apparatus for attaching a tube 20 and associated components to a frame 40 in a tattoo machine 100 in accordance with the present invention. Tattoo machines 100 are generally comprised of a frame 40, typically made of metal. Standard frames 40 have a lower binding post 52 and an upper binding post 50. There is also typically a coil mounting bracket 44 at the front portion of the frame 40, and a spring saddle 42 at the lower rear portion of the frame 40. At least one electromagnetic coil 60 is mounted on the coil mounting bracket 44. Preferably there are two coils, a front coil 60 and back coil 62. An armature bar 70 is attached to a spring 69 which extends from the spring saddle 42 and is adapted to reciprocate when AC power is applied to the electromagnetic coils 60 and 62 such that the armature bar 70 is alternately attracted and repelled by the coils 60 and 62, as is known in the art.]

[

[0010] Also as is known in the art, a needle bar 24 is attached to the armature bar 70 and passes through the coil mounting bracket 44 to maintain stability. The needle bar 24 has at least one needle attached to the needle bar tip (not shown). A hollow housing or tube 20 is placed over the needle bar 24 to guide the reciprocating needle bar 24. The present invention relates generally to an apparatus for securing the tube 20 to the frame 40 of a tattoo machine 100, referred to herein as the screw tight tube vice frame 30.]

[[0010.1] A hollow threaded rod 14 extends from the mounting bracket 44 towards the active end or front of the tattoo machine 100. The tube 20 is inserted into the hollow rod 14. A compression ferrule (not shown) comprising a hollow split ring with beveled edges is slipped over the tube 20 to abut the inner surface of the hollow rod 14. A compression nut 12 with an internal taper is then slipped over the tube 20 to abut and surround the ferrule (not shown) and screw onto the rod 14 thereby securing the tube 20 to the frame 40.]

[[0011] A tube grip 16 consisting of a hollow cylinder with a gnarled outer surface, which is a known tattoo machine component, is the slipped over the tube 20 the tube grip 16 may also be an integral component of the tube 20. A tube tip 18 is then inserted in the open end of the tube grip 16. The tube tip 18, tube 20, and tube grip 16 are connected as a unit.]

[[0011.1] Referring now to Figure 2, an exploded perspective view of the key components of the screw tight tube vice frame are shown in detail. The tube vice mechanism, which is used to attach a tube grip of standard industry measurement to the frame, is located on the front lower portion of the frame. The frame 40 is shown fully exposed without the additional tattoo machine 100 components. The lower binding post hole 46 and upper binding post hole 48 are shown. In the preferred embodiment the hollow cylinder or rod 14 is removable from the frame 40. The inside surface of the rod 14 is internally tapered.]

[[0011.2] The compression ferrule 10 is a split ring or hollow cylinder preferably composed of a malleable metal such as brass. The ferrule 10 is tapered from each end to a central high point about the mid circumference of the ferrule 10. The ferrule 10 compresses as pressure is applied to the tapered ends such that the internal diameter of the ferrule 10 is reduced and the split or gap gradually reduced. The tapered ends of the ferrule 10 are preferable machined to the same angle as the taper on the interior surface of the rod 14, such that a mirrored mating surface is created between the ferrule 10 and rod 14.]

[[0011.3] The ferrule 10 is compressed between the rod 14 and the compression nut 12, which is a nut having interior threads matching those on the exterior surface of the rod 14, and preferably has a gnarled or otherwise textured exterior surface to provide a grip to the operator. The nut 12 also has an internal taper matching or mirroring that of the ferrule 10. The compression nut 12 is rotated in a clockwise direction to compress and lock the ferrule 10 in place.]

{~~DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION~~

}[{~~0009] Components~~

~~[0010] The Screw-Tight Tube Vice Frame consists of a tube vice frame and a tube vice mechanism, which attaches a tube grip of standard industry measurement to the frame. The tube vice mechanism may include a removable hollow threaded rod to house the compression ferrule, or the hollow threaded section that houses the compression ferrule may be cast or machined as part of the frame. The tube vice mechanism also includes a compression nut that is tightened around the compression ferrule to secure the tube grip to the frame, and loosened to release it from the frame. The specifications for the threaded rod and compression ferrule are as follows:~~

~~[0011] threaded rod:~~}[0011.4] The rod 14 is between] approximately 1/2" to 5/8" {~~long, with~~}[in length and has a] 1/2 20 threading{~~; the~~}[, with an] inside diameter of {~~the hollow centre measures {fraction (~~}[either]5/16{~~)}~~}" or {~~{fraction (~~}11/64{~~)}~~}"[.]

[0012][The] compression ferrule{~~: usually measures~~ }[10 is optimally]1/4" {~~tall~~}[in length], with an inside diameter of {~~{fraction (~~}5/16{~~)}"~~

~~[0013] Manufacturing and Assembly~~

}[in an uncompressed state. The compression nut 12 must be sized to screw onto the rod 14.]

[0014]{~~The Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame may be made~~}[**The screw tight tube vice frame components may be manufactured**] {~~of~~}[**from**] metal (such as aluminum, brass, steel, or iron) or any other rigid material (such as plastic, {~~fibreglass~~}[**fiberglass**], or lexan). [**A malleable metal such as brass is used.**]Holes are drilled in the tube vice frame [**40**]as follows: {

~~[0017]~~}[**a hole for the upper binding post, a hole for the lower binder post,**] two holes drilled {~~on~~}[**in**] the {~~flat plane for~~}[**coil mounting bracket to accept**] the screws [**64**]that secure the coils {~~(one hole per coil)[0018]~~}[**60 and 62 and a**] drilled and tapped hole for the [**spring**]screw [**68**]that secures the {~~rear~~}spring {~~saddle~~}[**69**] to the frame {

~~[0019] The tube vice mechanism, which is used to attach a tube grip of standard industry measurement to the frame, is located on the front lower portion of the frame. It may include a removable hollow threaded rod to house the compression ferrule, or the hollow threaded section that houses the compression ferrule may be cast or machined as part of the frame.~~

}[**40.**]

[0020] {~~If a removable threaded rod is used to house the compression ferrule, an~~}[**An**] internal taper is machined into the {~~lower~~}[**front**] entrance of the threaded rod{,}[**14,**] starting at the outside diameter and machining inwards to a {~~recommended~~}depth {~~of~~}[**which is optimally**] 1/8". The {~~entry to the~~}threaded rod[**14**] is tapered internally to approximately the same degree as the compression ferrule [**10**]to allow the rod [**14**]to house the ferrule{.} [**10.**]The threaded rod [**14**]is attached to the tube vice frame[**30**] by machining the [**coil mounting bracket 44 on the**]frame [**40**]as follows: {~~[0021]~~}[**1. step-drilling**] a[**primary**] hole measuring {~~fraction~~}[**approximately**] {~~(~~}29/64{~~)~~}" in diameter{~~is step-drilled~~} two-thirds of the way into the front lower section of the {~~frame~~}[**coil mounting bracket 44.**] [**2. Drilling**]a secondary hole measuring {~~fraction~~}[**approximately**] {~~(~~}5/16{~~)~~}" or {~~fraction (~~}11/64{~~)~~}" in diameter{~~is drilled~~} through the remaining one-third of the {~~frame,~~}[**coil mounting bracket 44**] using the same center point as the previous hole{

~~[0023] the {fraction (29/64)}"~~}[**. The primary**] hole is tapped with a 1/2 20 bottoming tap from the entrance of the hole, starting at the {~~bottom~~}[**front**] of the {~~frame~~}[**coil mounting bracket**

44] and continuing through to the end of the step drilling (approximately two-thirds of the way into the {~~frame~~}[**coil mounting bracket 44**])[.]

[0024] {~~the~~}[**The**] threaded rod[**14**] is screwed into the threaded hole [**(not shown) and protrudes approximately a 1/2" from the front of the frame coil mounting bracket 44.**]

[**[0024.1] In a variation to the preferred embodiment, the removable hollow threaded rod 14 may be cast or machined as part of the coil mounting bracket 44 on the frame 40, rather than as a removable component.**]

[0025] If the hollow threaded {~~section~~}[**rod 14**] is cast as part of the frame{,}[**40,**] it protrudes approximately [**a**]1/2" from the {~~bottom~~}[**front**] of the {~~frame~~}[**coil mounting bracket 44**] (the same length as the threaded rod{,}[**14,**] described above, would protrude once screwed into the {~~frame~~}[**coil mounting bracket 44**]). If the frame[**40**] is cut on a CNC mill, the hollow threaded {~~section~~}[**rod 14**] may also be machined into the frame{,}[**40,**] protruding approximately 1/2" from the bottom of the frame {~~(again, the same length as the threaded rod or cast threaded section would protrude from the frame).~~}[**40.**] The same taper{~~(~~}[**, machined to a**]recommended depth of 1/8"{~~) applies~~}[**should be used**] whether a removable threaded rod [**14**]is used to house the compression ferrule [**10**]or the threaded {~~section~~}[**rod 14**] is cast or machined as part of the frame{.
}[**40.**]

[0026] The [**exterior surface of the brass**]compression ferrule {~~is usually made of a flexible material (often brass). It~~}[**10**] is tapered on both ends{;}[**with**] the tapers {~~meet~~}[**meeting**] in the middle{.}[**of the ferrule 10.**] A slit is made vertically through {~~half of~~ }the ferrule[**10**] to allow flexibility when it is compressed and tightened around the tube {~~grip.~~}[**20.**] The compression ferrule [**10**]is placed into the hollow section of the threaded rod

[14]or [machined]frame{-
}[component 14.]

[0027] The compression nut [12]is step drilled, drilled, and tapered to the same specifications as the threaded rod{-} [14.]It may be machined from any type of metal.{ ~~It is~~}[The nut 12 has interior threads adapted to be] screwed onto the threaded rod [14]or threaded section [14]of the frame [40]that houses the compression ferrule {~~with~~}[10 by turning the nut 12 in] a {~~tightening~~}[clockwise] motion to secure the tube {~~grip,~~}[20,] or {~~unscrewed~~}[conversely turning the nut 12] in {~~a loosening motion~~}[an anti-clockwise direction] to release the tube {~~grip.~~}[20.] {

~~[0028] Function~~

}

[

[0028] Referring now to Figure 3, a pre-assembly side detail view of a compression nut 12, ferrule 10 and threaded rod 14 is shown. The arrows indicate the direction of connection of the nut 12 to the rod 14. The tapered lip of the interior surface of the rod 14 serves to compress the ferrule 10 thereby reducing the interior diameter of the ferrule 10.]

[[0028.1] Figure 4 shows an assembled side detail view of a compression nut, ferrule and threaded rod. The compressed ferrule abuts the tube 20 with its interior surface, thereby securing the ferrule 10 in place without bending, crimping or other damage to the tube 20.]

[[0028.2] In use, the sterilized, removable components are assembled as follows: the hollow rod 14 is screwed clockwise into the coil mounting bracket 44 on the frame 40, then the needle bar 24 is inserted through the frame 40 and attached to the armature bar 70. The tube 20 then slides over the active or distal end of the needle bar 24 and into the frame 40. The ferrule 10 slides over the tube 20 to seat against the distal end of the rod 14 and the compression nut 12 is tightened clockwise to compress the ferrule 10 against the tube 20 thereby retaining it in the frame 40. The tube grip 16 slides over the tube 20, and is

secured. The tube tip 18 is then inserted inside the distal end of the tube grip 16 and over the needle bar 24, and is secured to the tube grip 16.]

[0029] When the compression nut [**12**]is turned clockwise in a tightening motion, the bevels [**or tapers**]make contact and slide over each other, creating pressure [**evenly around the circumference of the taper**]on the compression ferrule[**10**] and causing it to compress. The vertical slit [**in the ferrule 10**]provides{ ~~greater room~~}[**a gap**] for compression as the ends of the slit move toward each other, creating a squeezing effect and securing the tube {~~grip~~ }[**20**]to the frame[**40 without bending or crimping it**].

[0030] {~~Turning~~ }[**After use of the tattoo machine 100,**]the compression nut [**12 is rotated**]counter-clockwise {~~in a loosening motion relieves~~}[**to relieve**] the pressure on the compression ferrule{~~,~~}[**10,**] resulting in the release of the tube {~~grip.~~}[**20. The motion is easy to perform and avoids damage to the tube 20 which commonly occurs in prior art tattoo machines 100. The present invention is a streamlined apparatus due to the low profile, inline ferrule 10, rod 14 and nut 12 arrangement.**]

{

{~~ABSTRACT~~}

[**[0030.1] The preferred embodiment and variations herein described are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the scope of the invention to the precise forms disclosed. They are chosen and described to best explain the principles of the invention and its application and practical use to allow others skilled in the art to comprehend its teachings.**]

{~~On all modern tattoo machines, the tube grip is a removable part that houses~~}

[**[0030.2] As will be apparent to those skilled in the art in**] the {~~needle bar, which holds~~}[**light of**] the {~~needle groupings that move into~~}[**foregoing disclosure, many alterations**] and {~~out of~~}[**modifications are possible in**] the {~~skin in the act~~}[**practice**] of {~~tattooing. The tube grip and needle groupings must be removable to allow for cleaning and sterilization. This~~}[**this**] invention {~~is intended to improve~~}[**without departing from the spirit or scope thereof. Accordingly,**]the {~~technology currently used by tattoo machines to secure~~}[**scope of**] the {~~tube grip to~~}[**invention is to be construed in accordance with**] the {~~tattoo machine frame. Existing tube vice technology uses methods of securing~~}[**substance defined by**] the {~~tube grip to the tattoo machine frame that tend to bend or crimp the tube grip. The Screw Tight Tube Vice Frame uses tube vice technology that secures the tube grip in place just as securely as or more securely than existing technology, but will not bend or crimp the tube grip. It includes a frame with holes drilled and tapped for attaching it to other components of a tattoo machine and a tube vice mechanism for attaching the tube grip to the frame. The tube vice mechanism allows the tube grip to be secured to the tattoo machine frame with a simple twist, and released with a counter twist.~~}[**following claims.**]